STATES-ITEM FLASH

Monday, August 20, 1973 New Orleans, La. 10 Cents

'Plot' to assassinate Nixon cancels Canal Street parade

The Secret Service today uncovered "a possible plot to assassinate President Nixon," causing cancellation of his motorcade down Canal Street.

The President flew into a heavily guarded sector of New Orleans International Airport and was taken directly to The Rivergate for his speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) convention.

There was an unconfirmed report that a former New Orleans policeman, who tried to throw a burning flag at President Nixon here in 1970, was arrested at the request of the Secret Service.

And a New Orleans police spokesman said "a strange series of events" caused "some anxious moments" in connection with the President's visit.

Bill Hawthorne, a Secret Service spokesman in Washington, said, "We strongly advised President Nixon not to take his previously announced motorcade route on his visit to New Orleans today, and that recommendation was accepted by the White House staff."

The President's plane touched down at 10:53 a.m. and he and Mrs. Nixon were greeted by Gov. Edwin W. Edwards.

He was taken by limousine to The Rivergate but it was understood he was not going via the previously announced motorcade route.

At the airport, Lt. Gov. James E. Fitzmorris Jr. said the former policeman was picked up by local police at the request of the Secret Service. However, New Orleans police would not confirm the arrest.

Sgt. Frank Hayward, police public information officer, would say only that the Secret Service asked the department to assist in locating former officer Edwin Gaudet Jr. because of what the Secret Service called "radical tendencies."

Records showed Gaudet joined the force in August, 1964, and was suspended for 67 days in 1967 after an incident in a French Quarter bar in which he illegally discharged a firearm while off duty. At the end of the suspension, Gaudet resigned from the force, records showed.

On Aug. 14, 1970, police arrested Gaudet and booked him with attempted desecration of the American flag after they said he attempted to set fire to a flag and throw it at Nixon during a motorcade in the 400 block of Chartres.

The other two parts of the "strange series of events," Hayward said, were the theft of the official car of Police Supt. Clarence B. Giarrusso and the theft of a policeman's uniform.

A Secret Service source said the information on the alleged plot came from "police sources." He said that although the motorcade was canceled, the President "accepted the risk" of continuing his travel plans.

He said the Secret Service would give further details "only if there are arrests." He said a number of agents has been assigned to New Orleans to investigate the alleged conspiracy.

The President landed in a remote area of the airport called the cargo pad after the location at which he was to land had been changed three times.

The area was thick with law enforcement officers; including the entire Kenner police force, State Police, airport security men, Secret Service men, FBI agents and Jefferson Parish deputies with K-9 dogs.

It was enclosed by chain-link fence topped by three layers of barbed wire.

The Nixon plane was preceded by two planeloads of Washington newsmen and another carrying presidential aide Henry Kissinger. He walked to a limousine with another presidential aide, Gen. Alexander Haig.

No one but newsmen and security

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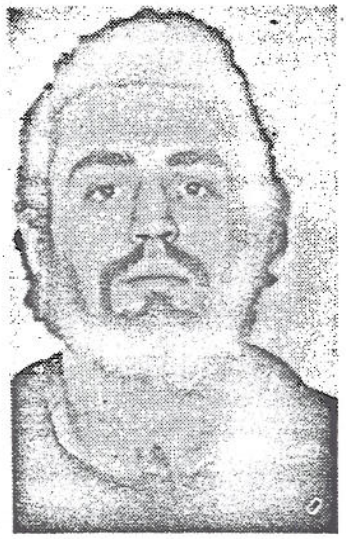
people were allowed near the presidential plane.

First to emerge was Mrs. Nixon, who had on a tailored white blouse with red and white polka dot skirt. The President had on a conservative blue suit and dark shoes. His face was tanned but appeared very strained.

They were greeted by the Edwards, who presented the President with a set of cufflinks and the First Lady with a dozen red roses.

Although it is not unusual for the Secret Service to advise the President on motorcades, it is unusual for the service to make such a recommendation public.

In Washington, a Secret Service spokesman warned against drawing the inference that the request for the ar-



EDWIN GAUDET

rest of Gaudet was connected with the alleged assassination plot.

Gerald Warren, deputy press secretary to the President, said the Florida White House learned of the possible threat "over the weekend" and Nixon personally decided to change the motorcade route. He said the Secret Service did not recommend cancellation of the visit.

Earlier, the Secret Service said it is believed more than one person is involved.

Giarrusso's car was taken about 2 a.m. from the driveway of his Algiers home. It was recovered between 7 and 8 a.m. by Third District police parked in front of 2326 Kildeer, near the lakefront.

Giarrusso's daughter said she looked out of the second-story window of their home during the night and noticed the car missing. The superintendent said he chased the thieves in his wife's car but lost them in Algiers.

Jerome Heffere, 58, who lives at 2329 Kildeer, said he noticed the car parked across the street early today and when he went out to go to work found his own car missing.

Police bomb squad members were going over the Giarrusso car looking for fingerprints. Police said nothing was missing from the car and its radios were intact.

The uniform was stolen from the private auto of Ptn. Bennett Lacour in the 5800 block of Forest Isle in lower Algiers.

Others in the official party are Ronald Zeigler, White House press secretary; Miss Ray M. Woods, presidential assistant; Bryce Harlow, counsellor to the President, and Patrick J. Buchanan, another Nixon aide.

The entire group, with the exception of Kissinger, is expected to fly out of the city early this afternoon en route to the Western White House at San Clemente, Calif.

Kissinger had been scheduled to be the principal speaker at the distinguished guest banquet today but he will make only a brief talk. Kissinger is to be the recipient of the VFW's Dwight David Eisenhower Gold Medal Award.

Speaking in place of Kissinger will be U. S. Rep. William Jennings Bryan Dorn of South Carolina, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

While at The Rivergate, Nixon is slated to receive the national VFW Auxiliary Peace Award for his efforts in ending the fighting in Vietnam.

Mrs. Lola Reid of South St. Paul, Minn., president of the auxiliary, is scheduled to present the award.

PATRICK M. CARR of Metairie, national commander of the VFW, will preside over today's sessions and will introduce the President.

Because of the limited space in The Rivergate, the public has not been invited to the presidential address. Only delegates to the convention or the auxiliary will be admitted.

The VFW national convention, the largest convention in the history of New Orleans, is expected to attract between 35,000 and 40,000 people.

It opened Friday with committee meetings, but swung into full gear last night with the traditional memorial service to the nation's servicemen and veterans who have given their lives.

THE MEMORIAL service was presided over by Carr and addressed by Rear Adm. Francis L. Garrett, chief of naval chaplains and the highest ranking military chaplain.

He called upon the veterans to remember sacrifices of those killed in defense of their country as a memorial to insure that Americans can enjoy freedom.

In addition to the President's address, the VFW is scheduled to present its J. Edgar Hoover Gold Medal Award to William E. Bjork, police chief of Moses Lake, Wash.

The VFW National Space Award will go to Capt. Eugene E. Cernan, commander of the Apollo 17 mission.

The convention is scheduled to continue through Friday at The Rivergate.